

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 97-239-C - ORDER NO. 98-866
NOVEMBER 4, 1998

IN RE: Proceeding to Establish Guidelines for an) ORDER RULING / PR
 Intrastate Universal Service Fund.) ON PETITION
)

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the Petition of the South Carolina Telephone Association (SCTA), which asks this Commission to address certain issues that were previously raised by SCTA in this Docket, but which were deferred by the Commission and remain outstanding in the above-captioned docket.

One of the issues to be addressed concerned the Lifeline and Link-Up programs. In Order No. 97-753, the Commission directed that all carriers of last resort would provide the maximum Lifeline Program benefit by January 1, 1999, and that the portion not covered by federal support would be funded through the State Universal Service Fund (State USF). SCTA states that it now seems likely that the State USF will not be implemented by January 1, 1999, and that until the State USF is implemented, the maximum Lifeline Program benefit cannot be realized.

We have received a reply to SCTA's Petition from the Consumer Advocate for the State of South Carolina (the Consumer Advocate). The Consumer Advocate states its belief that the simplest way to address this request would be for this Commission to change the January 1, 1999 date to coincide with the start date for the Federal USF,

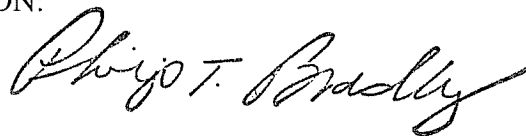
currently set for mid-1999. Even if the January date is extended, Lifeline customers are still eligible for \$5.25 worth of Lifeline support per month even today, just from Federal funding. The Consumer Advocate points out various other difficulties with implementing the maximum Lifeline Support benefit by January 1, 1999.

We agree with the Consumer Advocate's position. We hereby modify Order No. 97-753 to reflect implementation of maximum Lifeline support and Link-Up programs to coincide with the start date for the Federal Universal Service Fund.

All other matters raised by the SCTA Petition shall be held in abeyance pending a proceeding to address these issues in the first quarter of 1999.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Chairman

ATTEST:


Executive Director

(SEAL)